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VENUS AND ADONIS.

BY

WILLIAM SHAKSPERE

[*Shakspeare-Quarto Fac-similes, No. 12.*]

Vol. 12

SHAKSPERE'S
VENUS AND ADONIS.

THE FIRST QUARTO,
1593,

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BY

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LONDON:

PUBLISHT BY W. GRIGGS, HANOVER STREET, PECKHAM, S E.

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VENUS AND ADONIS.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we take up our Shakspeare, and after reading say, *Hamlet*, turn to *Venus and Adonis*, we cannot but be conscious of an entire and total change, a change not so much in degree of poetical accomplishment as in the whole attitude of mind. Now we are far too likely, on observing it, to be simply astonished, startled, shocked if you will, and then to let the matter drop, to toss it aside with a natural but uncritical carelessness, as if the thing were of no consequence, or were an inexplicable paradox. Nothing is quite inexplicable if we will give our minds to the task of finding it out; and surely it is but due to our devotion to Shakspeare to let nothing which concerns him seem to us trivial or of no account. The link between *Venus* and *Hamlet* is slight, indeed almost non-existent, if we consider simply these two works, the play and the poem, by themselves. But I think that if we look at them in their true light, as two steps in a ladder, or rather two moments in a growth, we shall see that there is no rude severance between the two, as we in our hasty unmethodical and uncritical manner are so ready to imagine, but a strict relationship and correspondence, if not to one another, at least to the poet who wrote them both, the one when he was less than thirty, and the other at perhaps forty. But to see them in their true light we must look at the circumstances of the case. We must study each in relation to its *milieu*; and to do so we must first cast aside that common conception of Shakspeare in which he poses sublimely, with a magnificent vagueness, independent of time and place and the common conditions of life, as a sort of glorified godhead, an abstraction; as if he had been, not merely the greatest poet among men, but also hardly a man at all. Shakspeare, like every great artist—poet, painter, or musician—was not less, but more, influenced than others, by the tendencies of his

age and his surroundings; for a great artist, especially in early life, is above all things receptive. The question, then, to ask ourselves, on considering a poem such as *Venus and Adonis*, the early and strange work of a great poet, is this: Under what circumstances was it produced? What influences, moral and artistic, of the surrounding society would seem likely to sway the course of its writer? It is this question, or these questions, that I shall try to answer.

When Shakspeare left his beautiful woodland valley home of Stratford—close and quiet among its streams and meadows, where as a child he might

“Lie in fields and look
 Along the ground through the blown grass,
 And wonder where the city was,
 Far out of sight, whose broil and bale
 They told [him] then for a child’s tale”—

left it and came to the city, not a child then, but a young man of some two-and-twenty, seeking employment among the players, he would find himself in the midst of a strangely constituted society, a swarming medley of vice and valour, grime and splendour, finikin daintiness and brutal coarseness; everywhere a vigorous stirring of life and striking out of literature, with all the evils consequent on such an awakening, flourishing on this hand and on that. The Renaissance, or new birth of the modern world—that sudden Samson-like uprising of the slumbering intellect, growing feeble and dreamy in the bonds of the Middle Ages, on the lap of a sanctimonious lulling Dalilah, the Church—first in Italy, with Petrarch and the humanists, with coins and medals and manuscripts and the ruins of old Rome for teachers, then, gradually, one by one, in the other nations: in Germany, with a revolt against this revolt, the Reformation: in France with Ronsard and Marot and the Huguenots; arose in England, with the growing prosperity, the increased comfort and leisure of life, and the new manners and metres introduced from Italy by the courtly travelled poets, Wyatt, Surrey, Sackville, toward the end of the reign of the Eighth Henry. The interminable epic measures, the prolix storytelling in verse of Lydgate’s *Falles of Princes* and *Storie of Thebes*, the flowing verses of a monk, sitting, one can fancy, in the sun, and pouring out with neither stint nor selection the heaped-up stores of what the Middle

Agés deemed learning—all this, the delight of his age, was passed over and forgotten, and a new speech was growing up and a new spirit. Poets began to comprehend that art has its laws and limits, that there is such a thing as elegance, selection of choice epithets and orderly arrangement of parts. The sonnet was introduced, new metres practised, undreamt-of refinements attempted. Poets who had "tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie," "novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Arioste, and Petrarch,"* added a new grace and a new life to English poetry: a life that was vigorous perhaps only as a growth, a grace that had much falseness, make-believe and triviality about it. But this was only a beginning; and it grew. Not a straight and orderly growth, but a flood of life that overburst its banks and swept overland like a torrent, breaking out and turning aside, now here, now there, with a wilful and uncheckable wildness. This fresh-found elegance, which was indeed so real and right a thing, caricatured itself. A freak of fantastic speech, refining upon refinement, and doubling in and out upon itself with the shining sinuosity of a snake—that which we usually call *Euphuism*, † from the pre-eminent fame of Lyly's admired book—twisted and tortured the poor English language no doubt cruelly, and ran into the most laughable eccentricities; yet it was a sign of life, a riot of imagination young and untamed, waiting the bit. Sidney's *Arcadia*, for instance, with all its profusion of brocade and dainty dresses, its hollow puppets (sighing shepherd-princes and smirking shepherdess-queens) inside them; with all its intolerable preciousness and affectation, its timeless and tuneless allegorising and parable-playing, is yet (let us remember) not the effete languor spasmodically jerking of an exhausted age, but the heyday blood of a new era. Moulded by this Renaissance influence—alike good and bad, life-giving and affected—two schools of poetry were formed, each at once connected and divided. The one, which we may indicate by perhaps its notablest product—

* Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, Ed. Arber; book i., ch. 31, p. 74.

† Dr. Landmann has shown, in the New Shakspeare Society's *Translations*, 1884, that it was rather *Gongorism*, got from the Spanish author Gongora. Mr. Sydney L. Lee traces the beginning of the movement in Lord Berners, about 1532.

Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, written at I know not what date before 1593—was frankly amorous and pagan; the other, which culminated in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (the first three Books appeared in 1590) was allegorical, dreamy and fantastic. In effect, the two were often mingled; both alike were held in high esteem, and formed together the body of book-read poetry.

But the Renaissance had another gift for England, and a greater, than Italianised poetry: the Drama. I call it a gift of the Renaissance, for the Renaissance was a world-wide re-awakening, not a mere revival of learning among a few Italian humanists. The Renaissance in England was properly the birth of the Drama; but the birth of the Drama was not possible till some facility in the ordinary verse-writing had been attained; nor was it at first generally recognised, I imagine, by the ingenious rhyming poets and their patrons, to be at all the superior thing that it was. The Drama, born in the universities, and due mainly to a scholastic desire on the part of Latin scholars to revive, or at least to imitate, the tragedy and comedy of antiquity, as known to them in the comedies of Plautus and the tragedies of Seneca, became almost immediately the darling of the people, well nigh weary of the buffoonery and inanity of the Mysteries and Moralities which had sufficed for the delight of the priest-ridden minds of the Middle Ages; weary of these, but trained and accustomed by them to take pleasure in a show in action. From the time that the trundling measures of *Ralph Royster Doyster* were laughed or lilted out on (may be) an Eton stage, and the chopped prose, with a gasp at the end of every ten syllables, of *Gorboduc* solemnised the Christmas merry-making of the benchers of the Inner Temple, the modern drama was an accomplished fact, and *Othello* a possibility. A possibility, but a possibility of the future; a fact, but only in germ. When Shakspeare came to London (in 1586 or thereabout) the drama was loved, hated and despised with an equal fervour. Ten years before, an angry cleric had asked in the course of a sermon: "Will not a filthy play, with the blast of a trumpet, sooner call thither a thousand, than an hour's tolling of the bell bring to the sermon an hundred?" The people flocked into inn-yards, and stood for hours on the stones, while a

handful of actors played out on a rough scaffold under the gallery the delectable medley of *King Cambyses* ("For I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein"); or it might be a story of the Fall of Troy, a pseudo-classic comedy newly rendered from the Italian, a jumble of English history or a patchwork *rifacimento* of some mythologic tale. With the growth of the taste, theatrical accommodation grew: in 1576-7 the first theatre was built, and was called "The Theatre;" the "Curtaine" was in existence in 1577, and in 1596 followed the "Blackfriars." Into these rough buildings—the "Blackfriars" was constructed out of ordinary dwelling-rooms, "The Theatre" was mainly of wood—a motley audience, rude, boisterous, free of speech and action to an inconceivable extent, crowded day by day; the common people thronged the pit, the elegant folk sat on the stage. The passion for the drama became universal; Puritans protested in vain; a dose of blood and horrors, or a dainty mess of scurrility, was worth all the sermons. But a pamphlet war raged between Puritan and player; and the Puritan attributed to the player all the wickedness that we owe to Adam. Nor was he entirely wrong. The player was at least no *better* than his patrons, we may be sure; and it is a significant fact that these latter, very far from likely to be squeamish, looked down on the players with a contempt that may not have been without its reasons. Into such society was Shakspeare entered.

Now the question is, Was not the poem *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, after seven years life in London, a likely, natural, nay almost necessary outcome of his position and surroundings, and of the ideas of poetry then in vogue? It is not at all necessary to believe that the poem was literally "the first heir of his invention;" composed long before its dedication to Lord Southampton, and before any of his plays had been written. In the first case it would be a false start; in the other, a deflection; and it is not difficult to see why the writing it would still be natural, even though Shakspeare had already written, as is generally thought, four or five fine plays. At first sight it seems incredible that in a time which we are accustomed to think of as a time of plays, a poet whose genius was essentially dramatic, and who is known to us almost entirely

as a writer of plays, should have thought it worth his while to turn aside from his proper path and his proper task of playwriting, in order to compose a poem which to our modern notions might have been just as well left unwritten. But a closer consideration of the case will show us, I think, reasons enough.

Shakspeare took the impress of his age. The popular taste of his time was of course dramatic; and when Shakspeare began to write for the stage, he had a large number of models before him; this in subject, that in treatment, this other in style. It was not merely "Marlowe's mighty line" that taught Shakspeare—the glorious and Titanic speech of that forerunner of our poet, whose splendour and volume of sound Shakspeare himself failed at first to equal. Before Marlowe and beside him there were dramatists, insignificant by themselves, who together had nevertheless formed a certain tradition, made possible a certain style and manner; so that in his early plays Shakspeare was fully under the impression of contemporary ideas. Lyly, the introducer and populariser of the fashion of Euphuism, had himself made a laughable take-off of pedantic affectation in his *Endimion*, published in 1591, but most probably not written later than 1589; and it is very possible that the Sir Tophas of his play suggested Don Adriano de Armado of *Love's Labours Lost*. Gascoigne's free translation from Ariosto's *Suppositi*, the comedy of *The Supposes*, played in 1566, was just the thing to put Shakspeare in the way of his *Comedy of Errors* and the other "mistaken identity" plays; while there is no need to look later than the time which produced Peele's *Arraignement of Paris* (1584), and other such pastorals and interludes, for a suggestion around which Shakspeare's exuberant fancy could play freely at will—for a faint foreshadowing of the delicate daintiness of *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, or of some parts perhaps of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. I do not press these particular points: I merely wish to show, from the evidence of those early plays which may have preceded *Venus and Adonis*, that Shakspeare was still in that period of probation, of brilliant working in set ways, which is usually gone through by every great artist; that he had not yet attained complete independence of spirit, complete freedom from tradition and fashion and contemporary in-

fluence. And I would further say, that just as in his plays he reflected contemporary fashions, glorified; so in his poems he was content again to reflect, alike glorified, that other literary mode which competed with the drama, and in some ways distanced it—the species of poetry of which I have spoken, the mythological and Italianised. For this was in truth the style of poetry which the literary leaders of the *beau monde* approved, and which everyone, I suppose, players and playwrights even, thought to be in itself a more important thing, a more grave and serious and ambitious attempt than the plays which were written but not printed, and which pleased the people. The drama, as Emerson well pointed out, had “become, by all chances, a national interest—by no means conspicuous, so that some great scholar would have thought of treating it in an English history—but not a whit less considerable because it was cheap, and of no account, like a baker’s shop” (*Repr. Men: Shakespeare*). Or, as I might venture to express it for my argument, *although* it had become a national interest, *yet*, in current estimation, it was cheap, and of no account. Thus we can easily imagine that Shakspeare would be attracted to this esteemed style of poetry, which was printed and published in books, dedicated showily to noblemen, and laid (I suppose) on the drawing-room tables of the fashionable folk who affected literature; attracted by the style itself *per se*, and also by the chance that it seemed to afford of a finer fame and reputation than he could get by the plays which cobblers paid their pennies to come and see.

Looking round on the mass of narrative, descriptive or lyrical poetry which the Renaissance movement from Henry VIII.’s time onward had brought into vogue, what models of poetical writing would Shakspeare find in his way; what causes or influences, in himself or in them, would incline him to this choice or that, amongst styles, subjects, modes and manners of esteemed verse-writing? It was natural, in the first place, that he should look for his subjects to Italy; either to the Latin classics or the modern Italian literature. Before 1593 most of the classic poets had been translated into English; their direct influence on the English literature of the time was therefore naturally great. Besides, the modern Italian revival of paganism

and re-discovery of antiquity had penetrated deeply into the English mind; "It was paganism," says Taine, "which reigned at the Court of England." In 1570 Ascham complained in his *Scholemaster*, "These bee the enchantments of Circes, brought out of Italie to marre mens maners in England; much, by example of ill life, but more by preceptes of fonde bookes of late translated out of Italian into English There be moe of these ungracious bookes set out in Printe wythin these fewe monethes, than have bene sene in England many score yeares before Than they have in more reverence the triumphes of Petrarche: than the Genesis of Moses: They make more account of Tullies offices than S. Pauls epistles: of a tale in Bocace than a storie of the Bible."* Shakspeare would read at school, and afterwards probably in Arthur Golding's† translation (1567), Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a poet and a work of poetry both, one would think, very congenial to the Renaissance spirit. He would read the amorous and pseudo-classic sonnets and stanzas, complaints and tales and elaborate fancy-weavings, in which the wit of the day expended itself, to no very great purpose mainly; the one most notable exception being Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, which, though not published till 1598, Shakspeare may very possibly have seen before the death of its writer in 1593. Side by side with these, he would also read the fantasies of pure wonder-working imagination, the chivalric and fanciful allegories which find their culmination and their glorification in the *Faerie Queene*, the first three books of which were published in 1590, and written still earlier. These two schools, to which I have referred above—the Latin amorous and the Italian fantastic—would both come before Shakspeare's view, either affording him a chance of fashionable rhyming, a chance of reputation among the wits and scholars of the day. He chose the former; and it is not difficult to account for his doing so.

For what tolerance could Shakspeare, full of strong vigour of soul and passionately in love with life, find or

* *The Scholemaster*, ed. Arber, 1870, bk. i., p. 78 *et passim*. The extract is given in Taine's *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, H. v. Laun's translation, vol. i., p. 241-5.

† This is the same who finished Sir Sydney's rendering of Philippe de Mornay's *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne!*

feel for the altogether lifeless symbolism and romantic unreality which make up the sweet and strange dreams of the mild Spenser; dreams acting themselves lengthily out in a land whose faint sunshining was not of this world, whose flowers were never breathed on by the winds of the earth's ocean, whose sternest realities are but shadows of mortal life? Spenser's poetry is a revolt, a recoil, from the wicked and bloody world he saw about him, from "the godless, muscular lustiness of Marlowe, Greene, and Peele," as Vernon Lee tells us in her picturesque essay on "The School of Boiardo."* But Shakspeare could never share this sensitive estrangement from any possible world, good or bad; could never take refuge, even for poetical phrase-making, in the most exquisite Spenserian unrealities. He required, as a stay and guide to his imagination, a basis of actuality; his world, even of fairies, must be wooded with English forests and clumped over by English clowns; and the "men and women fashioned by his fancy" must be real flesh-and-blood men and women, and not ghosts of moods and morals. Turning aside from Spenser and his Ariosto, he found in the mythological or legendary school of Marlowe at least life, passion, fire; something about which he could let his imagination play without complete severance from the world and human nature. For look at the *Hero and Leander* of the poet whom Drayton's finest lines praise rightly:—

"Next Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had; his raptures were
All fire and air, which made his verses clear;
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a Poet's brain."

Marlowe's splendid fragment, piously finished by George Chapman as well as he could, has an idealised actuality about it, very far removed from the remoteness of Spenser's attempt at actualising ideality. Out of the Greek poem of Musæus—supposed then to be the oldest poem in existence—Marlowe, with his sinewy strength of style and his gorgeous fancy, made a living love-tale, at once cruelly realistic and dauntlessly sublime. He never suffers us to forget that he has translated Ovid's *Amores*; but that, perhaps, at the

* *Euphorion*, Fisher Unwin, 1884, vol. ii., p. 114; and see from p. 113 to 117.

time, was no matter. Elizabethan society, as I have said, was not squeamish; and Shakspeare, when, having chosen his style and school, he sought after a seemly tale, turned to the well-thronged storehouse of "Venus' Clerk," and lighted on the tale of Venus and Adonis. If Shakspeare really had read *Hero and Leander* it is quite possible that three lines of the poem may have haunted his memory and led to his choice:—

"The men of wealthy Sestos every year,
For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,
*Rose-checked Adonis,** kept a solemn feast."

Any way, it was on this edifying subject that he made his poem, and the poem was extremely popular.

Venus and Adonis was published in 1593, by Richard Field, and sold at the sign of the White Greyhound, in St. Paul's Churchyard. It was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1603; "xviii. Aprilis: Richard ffield, Assigned ouer to Master Harrison senior 25 Junij 1594: Entred for his copie vnder th[e h]andes of the Archbissshop of Canterbury and master warden Stirrop a booke intituled VENUS AND ADONIS vjd."—(Arber's *Transcript*, ii., 630). In 1594 a second edition was called for; another in 1595, another in 1599, again in 1600, and twice in 1602; nor was its popularity exhausted at Shakspeare's death in 1616.† It is almost needless to quote the continually-quoted words of Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598):—"As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid liues in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare, witnes his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends." A similar tone, indeed a very echo of it, is observable in the lines (quoted in Mr. Furnivall's Introduction to the Leopold Shakspeare) from "A Rembrance of Some English Poets" (1598):—

* cf. "Rose-cheek'd Adonis," *V. & A.* l. 3.

† The Fac-simile which follows is from the unique original Quarto in the Bodleian Library. As to succeeding editions, Q2 is printed from Q1, Q3 from Q2, Q4 from Q3, Q5 and 6 from Q4. Sir Chas. Isham's copy of 1599 will now be Q4, the old Q4 becoming Q5, and so on. *Venus* is the only Quarto, besides *Lucrece*, which contains a signed Dedication by Shakspeare, and, like *Lucrece*, was very likely supervised in its printing by Shakspeare himself. His name, being attached to the Dedication, is not on the title-page.

“ And *Shakespeare* thou, whose honey-flowing Vaine,
 (Pleasing the World) thy Praises doth obtaine;
 Whose *Venus*, and whose *Lucrece* (sweete and chaste),
 Thy Name in fame's immortal Booke have plac't.
 Live ever you! at least, in fame line ever!
 Well may the Body die; but Fame dies neuer.”

A chance allusion to the poem in Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the Exchange* (also quoted by Mr. Furnivall)—“ I never read anything but *Venus and Adonis*”—shows, if anything still more convincingly, the firm hold which it had of the public mind. And, as nothing is so great a tribute to a poet as imitation on the part of another,* we may well claim, I think, the *Shepherd's Song of Venus and Adonis*, contributed to *England's Helicon* (1600) by the devout Catholic Henry Constable, as another evidence of the esteem in which Shakspeare's poem was held: for I at least can make nothing of Constable's tripping little lines save as the most open and definite imitation, in miniature, of the earlier poet's large and glowing picture. This free plagiarism by Constable, his frank acceptance of the story of Venus and Adonis as an unexceptionable theme for poetry, is to me a stronger testimony than any other to the licence which even the most careful poets of the day allowed themselves. It is this same Constable who went into exile for his religious faith, and on returning stealthily to England was imprisoned for many years in the Tower: who wrote the devoutest “*Spiritual Sonnets*,” in which he prayed to the Virgin Mary with the passion of a lover to his lady. If Shakspeare wrote his poem for reputation, he gained his end. It was *Venus and Adonis* that made his fame.

Let us look at it a little more closely. The story itself (Ovid, † *Met.* x. 9. 10) is well known; but I may give a few

* Marston's poem of *Pigmalion's Image* (1598), with its evident echoes of *Venus and Adonis*, is by some thought to be an imitation, by some a parody. It is quite as likely to be the former, as Mr. Furnivall suggests (Leopold Shakspeare, p. xxxii-iii.)

† The indebtedness of Shakspeare to Ovid, throughout the poem, has been carefully pointed out by Professor Spencer Baynes in the third of his articles on “*What Shakspeare learnt at School*” (*Fraser's Magazine*, May, 1880). “*In his narrative*,” says Professor Baynes, “*he has borrowed not only from Ovid's account of the same story, but from other fables, especially from those of Salmacis in the fourth book, and from the graphic picture of the hunting in Calydon, contained in the eighth book of the 'Metamorphoses.'*” Professor Baynes' collation of lines in Shakspeare and Ovid proves almost beyond question that Shakspeare's “*small Latin*” was at least enough for the reading of Ovid. See, on *Venus and Adonis*, p. 629-632 of *Fraser*.

lines from the beautiful episode in Keats's *Endymion*, in which the pith of the old story is exquisitely and delicately given, as only Keats could give it. The words come from a certain "feathered lyrist," or winged Cupid, watching the sleeping Adonis in the myrtle-walled magical chamber among the faery woods.

"I need not any hearing tire
 By telling how the sea-born goddess pined
 For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
 Him all in all unto her doting self.
 Who would not be so prison'd? but, fond elf,
 He was content to let her amorous plea
 Faint through his careless arms; content to see
 An unseized heaven dying at his feet;
 Content, O fool! to make a cold retreat,
 When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
 Lay sorrowing; when every tear was born
 Of diverse passion; when her lips and eyes
 Were closed in sullen moisture, and quick sighs
 Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.
 Hush! no exclaim—yet, justly might'st thou call
 Curses upon his head.—I was half glad,
 But my poor mistress went distract and mad,
 When the boar tusk'd him: so away she flew
 To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew
 Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard;
 Whereon it was decreed he should be rear'd
 Each summer-time to life." * *

Shakspeare, following his model, ends with the death of Adonis, and that divinely passionate and potent curse on love, which might be inscribed as a motto over the poetry of Young England and Young Italy of to-day, uttered by the desperate goddess over the slain body of Adonis. This is the subject. But what shall I say of Shakspeare's manner of treating it?

Genius has its audacity, and is withal easily complaisant, to begin with, to the modes of the day. The speech of Shakspeare's day was very outspoken, even with the most circumspect; and Shakspeare, as I have shown, was thrown into necessarily the most reckless and dissolute set, the players, men who had no reputation to keep up, and many of whom were no better than they were thought to be. Does not Shakspeare himself say (Sonnet cxi.) :—

* *Endymion*, bk. ii., l. 457-478. M. Leconte de Lisle, in his *Poèmes Antiques* (Lemerre, in-12, p. 242) has a delicately carved little cameo on "The Return of Adonis."

"O, for my sake do you with fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide
 Than public means, which public manners breeds.
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
 And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand :
 Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd."

The poem is simply the natural result of the various conditions which I have tried to indicate : it is the work of a young man, of perfervid imagination and intense life and passion, living the ignoble life of a player, instigated possibly by fast fashionable acquaintances (such as the Earl of Southampton, to whom the poem is dedicated), and desirous on his own account to follow a current literary vogue. One can foresee that he will exceed his models, not merely in the good, but equally in the bad qualities which must inevitably result from the misused good. Shakspeare's splendour of imagination, wasted on this mean stuff, infused into it an extraordinary passionateness, and a sensuality glorified and yet intensified. | The analytical power which gave him the minute detail of his subsequent psychology—that crowded succession of delicate touches by which he painted throbbingly alive and bare to its recesses the human soul—diverted from its proper function, turned from psychological into physiological, becomes here a mass of too distinct detail, which is simply gross. | And as Shakspeare could never do a thing by halves, so into this poem he flung himself with his whole heart and the full fire and heat of his ardent imagination. It is a genuine breath of the early Renaissance spirit : it is Renaissance in its audacity, its shamelessness, its glowing and throbbing colour, as of a canvas of Correggio or Titian : a neo-pagan product, splendid and sensual, an immature maturity from which, in any time but Shakspeare's, we should have augured only a succession of similar pictures, each more worthless than the last, the vice living where the poetry died off. But this is the author of *Hamlet* ! Yes, and it is quite credible. *Venus and Adonis* was but a deflection, an experiment, a concession : the early excess of a strong genius not yet grown to maturity, swayed by forces whose full import he does not fully understand, the Renaissance forces which finally built up the English drama, but which at first seemed instinct only with the pagan riot of humanist Italy. Like

Goethe and Schiller, Shakspeare had his "Sturm und Drang Periode;" like them he achieved fame by it; like them he passed out of it and beyond it; and just as we forget the *Robbers* in *Wallenstein*, and *Werther* in *Wilhelm Meister*, so when we read *Hamlet* our mind's vision is seldom crossed by *Venus and Adonis*.

There are passages in the poem—we need not disguise it—which, after all allowances have been made (and these, I think, explain and excuse much), we cannot excuse; we can but regret them. But there is something more in the poem, something better, than this Latin licence; in especial, a vein of moral reflectiveness, which we seek in vain to find in Ovid, together with an "outdoor poetry" which is purely English and entirely admirable. As Professor Baynes remarks in the third of his papers on "What Shakspeare learnt at School":—"While contemplating the lower passion steadily in all its force and charm, he has at the same time the larger vision which enables him to see through and beyond it, the reflective insight to measure its results, and to estimate with remorseless accuracy its true worth." That this occasional and tardy morality, or intellectual recognition of the real folly of the passion exhibited, makes very much difference to the tone of the poem, cannot, I think, be maintained. It is undoubtedly true, it is decidedly artistic, its possible presence sharply divides the modern poet and his world from the world of the Roman poet, but its moral influence on the poem itself is an influence purely external and apart: the heart of the poet is with Venus, if his head respects Adonis. The important thing to note is, that a sense of moral fitness being here present, though only as an adjunct or appendage, and by no means as a guiding principle, this quality, strengthened with the experience and the growing calmness of years, may in time become a guiding principle, and prompt to quite other kinds of work.

The "outdoor poetry" which I signalled as the second remarkable merit of the poem, has the minuteness of a professed landscape-painter, yet it is never mere landscape. Always artistically subordinate to the main action, always a background, an accompaniment of light and shade, an arrangement of harmonious dots and dashes, it adds to the interest of the two tragical and passionate figures in the

foreground, the interest of a land and sky in sympathy with them. It was not in Ovid that the poet found these things. The skies, morning-red for a stormy day (453) cloud-thronged for foul weather (972), blotted by misty vapours (184), or hushed before the rushing of the rain (458); the night-wanderers in the woods (825), the lark waking the morning (853), the snail—a wonderful touch—creeping back into its shell (1033), the caterpillars' trail on the leaves (798), the rain and wind-vest day (965), the hounds (913-924), the horse (259-324), the hare and hounds (669-708); all these (and more on every page), sometimes with a delicate touch, sometimes in an elaborate description, reveal the country-bred, country-knowing and country-loving Will Shakspeare of Stratford.* Such minute truth to fact could only be the result of actual personal observation of the closest kind; while in the art with which apparently prosaic details are glorified into poetry, we see the early workings of the genius of Shakspeare, so ethereal, yet so little indefinite.

In the language of *Venus and Adonis*, as in that of Shakspeare's early plays, there is everywhere the suggestion of a struggle, ending in a compromise, between naturalness and the affectation which passed as art. The

“ Wild waves
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend,”

of line 820 come to us in company with “the sun with purple-coloured face” of line 1: by the side of pleadings of genuine human passion, words straight from the heart, with a heart's heat in them and a heart's directness, march in neat order the antitheses and allegories of the dominant Euphuism or Gongorism. A natural and inextinguishable force and freedom fight hard against the cramping affectation: neither as yet has the mastery, though nature seems like to be too strong and too wilful for bonds. The metre, no more than the language, has attained the free felicity into which Shakspeare gradually grew; the lines are strong and sonorous, sweet and musical—musical always, but with something of a measured music, a too consciously measured music about them; not yet musical, as flowers are beautiful, by natural growth. Every line, almost,

* “Such lines as those about the eagle flapping, ‘shaking its wings,’ l. 57, over its food, send us still to the Zoological Gardens to verify.”—(F. J. F., Leopold Shakspeare).

has a pause in sense at the end of its due five feet; far more pauses than in the *Lucrece* of next year, though it must be remembered that the seven-line metre of the latter is more likely to carry on the sense from line to line (in its fourth and fifth) than the six-line metre of *Venus*. With the greater metrical freedom of *Lucrece* comes too more of keen worldly reflection, more restraint, and in a few parts more dramatic likelihood (as the servant in 1270), but on the whole, in real poetic power, splendid in its excess, I cannot think it the equal of the earlier poem.

Nor could it have equalled it in popularity: there were only five editions of *Lucrece** during Shakspeare's lifetime, as against eight of *Venus*.† Perhaps it was the lesser success of his second poem that drove Shakspeare back to his right employment, the drama. Perhaps the mood was exhausted: perhaps his end had been gained. *Venus and Adonis* had brought him into reputation with the wits as a poet amongst those "who are most passionate to bewaile and bemoane the perplexities of Love;" and the further fame of *Romeo and Juliet*, most commonly placed about this period, though I should like to believe it was written after, and not before *Venus and Adonis*—the latter the dross, the former the pure fire-tried gold—had probably confirmed Shakspeare in his henceforth unbroken devotion to the drama. I say unbroken, because the sonnets, printed in 1609, and perhaps then without the poet's consent, were no doubt written at various periods in Shakspeare's life, for his own pleasure merely, and that of his friends; while *The Passionate Pilgrim* of 1598 is certainly a pirate's trick, and very improbably includes anything by Shakspeare, beyond the two unprinted sonnets (I., II.) and the sonnets and song from *Love's Labours Lost* (III., V., XVI.). Shakspeare was gaining strength, gaining independence, gaining judgment. The author of *Venus and Adonis* was on the way to become the author of *Hamlet*, the great dramatic mirrorer, the great moral teacher, of his own and every age. For between these two, so unlike that the contrast startles us, there is a period of growth, not a gulf of severance; a passage of years, during which unripeness may become ripe, and passion be mellowed into wisdom.

* In 1594, 1598, 1600, 1607, 1616.

† In 1593, 1594, 1596, 1599, 1599, 1600, 1602a, 1602b.

In *Venus and Adonis* we see the author of *Hamlet*, young ; in *Hamlet* we see the author of *Venus and Adonis*, grown older and grown wiser. Can we expect that the two should be similar? could we wish it? The chambers of the House of Life are not of one even whiteness, the pure unbroken whiteness of whitewash ; they are coloured with divers colours, they are hung with the arras woven of dreams and deeds, and the picturings upon the walls of the chambers of the House of Life are many.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

The present Fac-simile is from the unique original in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

In previous Fac-similes the letters c and e, r and t, f and s, are occasionally difficult to distinguish, from the type of the original being battered. In all such cases it may be safely assumed that the letter which should be right, is meant. In 2 *Henry IV.*, IV. iii. 45, p. 58, last line, "hooke-nosoe," should be "hook-nosde," ; the upright of the d unluckily failed to print. Henceforth, all sheets will be past for press by the Editor as well as the Lithographer.

Troilus and Cressida is partly on the stone ; *Richard II.*, Qo. 1, will be put on forthwith.—F.J.F.



VENVS AND ADONIS

*Vilia miretur vulgus : mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministrat aqua.*



LONDON

Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at
the signe of the white Greyhound in
Paules Church-yard.

1593.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
Henrie VVriothesley, Earle of Southampton,
and Baron of Titchfield.

Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolisht lines to your Lordship, nor how the worlde will censure mee for choosing so strong a proppe to support so vveake a burthen, onelye if your Honour seeme but pleased, I account my selfe highly praised, and vowe to take aduantage of all idle houres, till I haue honoured you vvith some grauer labour. But if the first heire of my inuention proue deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-father: and neuer after eare so barren a land, for feare it yeeld me still so bad a haruest, I leane it to your Honourable suruey, and your Honor to your hearts content vvich I wish may alwaies answer your owne vvish, and the vvorlds hopefull expectation.

Your Honors in all dutie,

William Shakespeare.



VENUS AND ADONIS.

EVEN as the sunne with purple-colour'd face,
 Had tane his last leaue of the weeping mome,
 Rose-cheekt Adonis hied him to the chace,
 Hunting he lou'd, but loue he laught to scorne:
 Sick-thoughted Venus makes amaine vnto him,
 And like a bold fac'd suter ginnes to woo him.

Thrise fairer then my selfe, (thus she began)
 The fields chiefe flower, sweet aboue compare,
 Staine to all Nimphs, more louely then a man,
 More white, and red, then doues, or roses are:
 Nature that made thee with her selfe at strife,
 Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

Vouchsafe thou wonder to alight thy steed,
 And raine his proud head to the saddle bow,
 If thou wilt daine this fauor, for thy meed
 A thousand honie secrets shalt thou know:
 Here come and sit, where neuer serpent hisses,
 And being set, Ile smother thee with kisses.

B

VENVS AND ADONIS.

19+ And yet not cloy thy lips with loth'd facietie,
 But rather famish them amid their plentie,
 Making them red, and pale, with fresh varietie:
 22 Ten kisses short as one, one long as twentie:
 A sommers day will seeme an houre but short,
 24 Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.

VWith this she ceazeth on his sweating palme,
 The president of pith, and liuelyhood,
 And trembling in her passion, calls it balme,
 28 Earths soueraigne salue, to do a goddesse good,
 Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force,
 30 Couragiously to plucke him from his horse.

Ouer one arme the lustie courfers raine,
 Vnder her other was the tender boy,
 VWho blusht, and powted in a dull disdain,
 34 VWith leaden appetite, vnapt to toy,
 She red, and hot, as coles of glovving fier,
 36 Hered for shame, but frostie in desier.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough,
 Nimble she fastens, (ô how quicke is loue!)
 The steed is stalled vp, and euen now,
 40 To tie the rider she begins to proue:
 Backward she pusht him, as she would be thrust,
 42 And gouern'd him in strength though not in lust.

So

VENVS AND ADONIS.

So soone was she along, as he was downe,
 Each leaning on their elbows and their hips:
 Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
 And gins to chide, but soone she stops his lips,
 And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
 If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall neuer open.

43

46

48

He burnes with bashfull shame, she with her teares
 Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheekes,
 Then with her windie sighes, and golden heares,
 To fan, and blow them drie againe she seekes.

52

He saith, she is immodest, blames her misse,
 VVhat followes more, she murthers with a kisse.

54

Euen as an emptie Eagle sharpe by fast,
 Tires with her beake on feathers, flesh, and bone,
 Shaking her wings, deuouring all in hast,
 Till either gorge be stuft, or pray be gone:

58

Euen so she kist his brow, his cheek, his chin,
 And where she ends, she doth anew begin.

60

Forst to content, but neuer to obey,
 Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face.

She feedeth on the stearne, as on a pray,
 And calls it heauenly moisture, aire of grace,
 VVishing her cheekes were gardens ful of flowers,
 So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.

64

66

B ij

VENVS AND ADONIS.

67 Looke how a bird lyes tangled in a net,
 So fastned in her armes Adonis lyes,
 Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,
 70 VVhich bred more beautie in his angrie eyes:
 Raine added to a riuier that is ranke,
 72 Perforce will force it ouerflow the banke.

Still she intreats, and prettily intreats,
 For to a prettie eare she tunes her tale.
 Still is he fullein, still he lowres and frets,
 76 Twixt crimson shame, and anger ashie pale,
 Being red she loues him best, and being white,
 78 Her best is betterd with a more delight.

Looke how he can, she cannot chuse but loue,
 And by her faire immortal hand she sweares,
 From his soft bosome neuer to remoue,
 82 Till he take truce with her contending teares,
 VVhich lōg haue rained, making her cheeks al wet,
 84 And one sweet kisse shal pay this compleesse debt.

Vpon this promise did he raise his chin,
 Like a diuedapper peering through a waue,
 VWho being lookt on, ducks as quickly in:
 88 So offers he to giue what she did craue,
 But when her lips were readie for his pay,
 90 He winks, and turnes his lips another way.

Neuer

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Neuer did passenger in sommers heat,
 More thirst for drinke, then she for this good turne,
 Her helpe she sees, but helpe she cannot get,
 She bathes in water, yet her fire must burne:

Oh pitie gan she crie, flint-hearted boy,
 Tis but a kisse I begge, why art thou coy?

I haue bene wooed as I intreat thee now,
 Euen by the sterne, and direfull god of warre,
 VVhose sinowie necke in battell nere did bow,
 VVho conquers where he comes in euerie iarre,
 Yet hath he bene my captiue, and my slaue,
 And begd for that which thou vnaskt shalt haue.

Ouer my Altars hath he hong his launce,
 His battred shield, his vncontrolled crest,
 And for my sake hath learnd to sport, and daunce,
 To toy, to wanton, dallie, smile, and iest,
 Scorning his churlish drumme, and ensigne red,
 Making my armes his field, his tent my bed.

Thus he that ouer-ruld, I ouer-swayed,
 Leading him prisoner in a red rose chaine,
 Strong-temperd Steele his stronger strength obeyed.
 Yet was he seruile to my coy disdain,

Oh be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
 For maistring her that foyle the god of fight.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

115 Touch but my lips with those faire lips of thine,
 Though mine be not so faire, yet are they red,
 The kisse shalbe thine owne as well as mine,
 118 VVhat seeft thou in the ground? hold vp thy head,
 Looke in mine ey-bals, there thy beautie lyes,
 120 Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?

Art thou asham'd to kisse? then winke againe,
 And I will winke, so shall the day seeme night.
 Loue keepes his reuels where there are but twaine:
 124 Be bold to play, our sport is not in fight,
 These blew-veind violets whereon we leane,
 126 Neuer can blab, nor know not what we meane.

The tender spring vpon thy tempting lip,
 Shewes thee vnripe; yet maist thou well be tasted,
 Make vse of time, ler not aduantage slip,
 130 Beautie within it selfe should not be wasted,
 Faire flowers that are not gathred in their prime,
 132 Rot, and consume them selues in litle time.

VVere I hard-fauour'd, foule, or wrinckled old,
 Il-nurtur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
 Ore-worne, despised, reumatique, and cold,
 136 Thick-sighted, barren, leane, and lacking iuyce;
 Thē mightst thou pause, for thē I were not for thee,
 138 But hauing no defects, why doest abhor me?

Thou

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow,
 Mine eyes are grey, and bright, & quicke in turning:
 My beautie as the spring doth yearelie grow,
 My flesh is soft, and plumpe, my marrow burning,
 My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
 VVould in thy palme dissolue, or seeme to melt.

139

142

144

Bid me discourse, I will inchaunt thine care,
 Or like a Fairie, trip vpon the greene,
 Or like a Nimph, with long disheueled heare,
 Daunce on the sands, and yet no footing seene.

148

Loue is a spirit all compact of fire,
 Not grosse to sinke, but light, and will aspire.

150

VVitnesse this Primrose banke whereon I lie,
 These forcelesse flowers like sturdy trees support me:
 Two strengthes doues will draw me through the skie,
 From morne till night, euen where I list to sport me.

154

Is loue so light sweet boy, and may it be,
 That thou should thinke it heauie vnto thee?

156

Is thine owne heart to thine owne face affected?
 Can thy right hand ceaze loue vpon thy left?
 Then woo thy selfe, be of thy selfe reiected:
 Steale thine own freedome, and complaine on theft.
 Narcissus so him selfe him selfe forsooke,
 And died to kisse his shadow in the brooke.

160

162

VENVS AND ADONIS.

163 Torchcs are made to light, iewels to weare,
 Dainties to tast, fresh beautie for the vse,
 Herbes for their smell, and s'appie plants to beare.
 166 Things growing to them selues, are growths abuse,
 Seeds spring frō seeds, & beauty breedeth beauty,
 168 Thou wast begot, to get it is thy duty.

Vpon the earths increase why shouldst thou feed,
 Vnlesse the earth with thy increase be fed?
 By law of nature thou art bound to breed,
 172 That thine may liue, when thou thy selfe art dead:
 And so in spite of death thou doest suruiue,
 174 In that thy likenesse still is left aliue.

By this the loue-sicke Queene began to sweate,
 For where they lay the shadow had forsooke them,
 And Titan tired in the midday heate,
 176 VVith burning eye did hotly ouer-looke them,
 VVishing Adonis had his teame to guide,
 180 So he were like him, and by Venus side.

And now Adonis with a lazie sprite,
 And with a heauie, darke, disliking eye,
 His lowring browes ore-whelming his faire sight,
 182 Likd mistie vapors when they blot the skie,
 So wring his cheekes, cries, fie, no more of loue,
 184 The sunne doth burne my face I must remoue.

Ay, me,

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Ay, me, (quoth Venus) young, and so vnkinde,
 VVhat bare excuses mak'st thou to be gon?
 He sigh celestiall breath, whose gentle winde,
 Shall cooie the heate of this descending sun:
 He make a shadow for thee of my heares,
 If they burn too, He quench them with my teares.

The sun that shines from heauen, shines but warme,
 And lo I lye betweene that sunne, and thee:
 The heate I haue from thence doth litle harme,
 Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me,
 And were I not immortall, life were done,
 Betweene this heauenly, and earthly sunne.

Art thou obdurate, flintie, hard as steele?
 Nay more then flint, for stone at raine relenteth:
 Art thou a womans sonne and canst not feele
 VVhat tis to loue, how want of loue tormenteth?
 O had thy mother borne so hard a minde,
 She had not brought forth thee, but died vnkind.

VVhat am I that thou shouldst contemne me this?
 Or what great danger, dwels vpon my sute?
 VVhat were thy lips the worse for one poore kis?
 Speake faire, but speake faire words, or else be mute:
 Giue me one kisse, He giue it thee againe,
 And one for intrest, if thou wilt haue twaine,

VENVS AND ADONIS.

217 Fic, liuelesse picture, cold, and sencelesse stone,
 VVell painted idoll, image dull, and dead,
 Statüe contenting but the eye alone,
 214 Thing like a man, but of no woman bred:
 Thou art no man, though of a mans complexion,
 216 For men will kisse euen by their owne direction.

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,
 And swelling passion doth prouoke a pause,
 Red cheeks, and fierie eyes blaze forth her wrong:
 220 Being Iudge in loue, she cannot right her cause.
 And now she weeps, & now she faine would speake
 222 And now her sobs do her intendments breake.

Sometime she shakes her head, and then his hand,
 Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground;
 Sometime her armes infold him like a band,
 226 She would, he will not in her armes be bound:
 And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
 228 She locks her lillie fingers one in one.

Fondling, she saith, since I haue hemd thee here
 VVithin the circuit of this iuorie pale,
 Ile be a parke, and thou shalt be my deare:
 232 Feed where thou wilt, on mountaine, or in dale;
 Graze on my lips, and if those hills be drie,
 234 Stray lower, where the pleasant fountaines lie.

VVithin

VENUS AND ADONIS.

VVitin this limit is reliefe inough,
 Sweet bottome grasse, and high delightfull plaine,
 Round rising hillocks,brakes obscure,and rough,
 To shelter thee from tempest,and from raine :
 Then be my deare, since I am such a parke,
 No dog shal rowze thee,though a thousand bark.

At this Adonis smiles as in disdaine,
 That in ech cheek appears a prettie dimple ;
 Loue made those hollowes, if him selfe were slaine,
 He might be buried in a tombe so simple,
 Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie,
 VVhy there loue liu'd, & there he could not die.

These louely caues, these round inchanting pits,
 Opend their mouthes to swallow Venus liking :
 Being mad before, how doth she now for wits?
 Strucke dead at first, what needs a second striking ?
 Poore Queene of loue, in thine own law forlorne,
 To loue a cheek that smiles at thee in scorne.

Now which way shall she turne ? what shall she say?
 Her words are done, her woes the more increasing,
 The time is spent, her obiect will away,
 And from her twining armes doth vrge releasing:
 Pitie she cries, some fauour, some remorse,
 Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

259 But lo from forth a copp s that neighbors by,
 A breeding Iennet, lustie, young, and proud,
 Adonis trampling Courser doth espy:
 262 And forth she rushes, snorts, and neighs aloud.
 The strong-neckt steed being tied vnto a tree,
 264 Breaketh his raine, and to her straight goes hee.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
 And now his wouen girthes he breaks afunder,
 The bearing earth with his hard hoofe he wounds,
 268 VVhose hollow wombe resounds like heauens thun-
 The yron bit he crusheth tweene his teeth, (der,
 270 Controlling what he was controlled with.

His eares vp prickt, his braided hanging mane
 Vpon his compact crest now stand on end,
 His nostrils drinke the aire, and forth againe
 274 As from a fornace, vapors doth he send:
 His eye which scornfully glisters like fire,
 276 Shewes his hote courage, and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,
 VVith gentle maiestie, and modest pride,
 Anon he reres vpright, curuets, and leaps,
 280 As who should say, lo thus my strength is tride.
 And this I do, to captiuat the eye,
 282 Of the faire breeder that is standing by.

VVhat

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VVhat recketh he his riders angrie sturre,
His flattering holla, or his stand, I say, 283

VVhat cares he now, for curbe, or pricking spurre,
For rich caparisons, or trappings gay : 286

He sees his loue, and nothing else he sees,
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees. 288

Looke when a Painter would surpasse the life,
In limming out a well proportioned steed, 289
His Art with Natures workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the liuing should exceed : 292

So did this Horſe excell a common one,
In ſhape, in courage, colour, pace and bone. 294

Round hooft, ſhort ioynted, fetlocks ſhag, and long, 295
Broad breſt, full eye, ſmall head, and noſtrill wide,
High creſt, ſhort eares, ſtraight legs, & paſſing ſtrög,
Thin mane, thicke taile, broad buttock, tender hide: 298

Looke what a Horſe ſhould haue, he did not lack,
Saue a proud rider on ſo proud a back. 300

Sometime he ſcuds farre off, and there he ſtares, 301
Anon he ſtarts, at ſturring of a feather:

To bid the wind a baſe he now prepares,
And where he runne, or flie, they know not whether: 304

For through his mane, & taile, the high wind ſings,
Fanning the haire, who waue like feathred wings. 306

VENVS AND ADONIS.

307 He lookes vpon his loue, and neighes vnto her,
 She answers him, as if she knew his minde,
 Being proud as females are, to see him woo her,
 310 She puts on outward strangenessse, seemes vnkinde:
 Spurnes at his loue, and scorns the heat he feeles,
 312 Beating his kind imbracements with her heeles.

313 Then like a melancholy malcontent,
 He vailes his taile that like a falling plume,
 Coole shadow to his melting buttocke lent,
 316 He stamps, and bites the poore flies in his fume :
 His loue perceiuing how he was inrag'd,
 318 Grew kinder, and his furie was affwag'd.

319 His testie maister goeth about to take him,
 VVhen lo the vnbackt breeder full of feare,
 Iealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
 322 VVith her the Horse, and left Adonis there :
 As they were mad vnto the wood they hie them,
 324 Out stripping crowes, that striue to ouerfly them.

325 All swolne with chafing, downe Adonis sits,
 Banning his boystrous, and vnruely beast;
 And now the happie season once more fits
 328 That louesicke loue, by pleading may be blest :
 For louers say, the heart hath treble wrong,
 330 VVhen it is bard the aydance of the tongue.

An

VENVS AND ADONIS.

An Ouen that is stopt, or riuer stayd,
 Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage:
 So of concealed sorow may be sayd,
 Free vent of words loues fier doth asswage,
 But when the hearts attorney once is mute,
 The client breakes, as desperat in his sute.

He sees her comming, and begins to glow:
 Euen as a dying coale reuiues with winde,
 And with his bonnet hides his angrie brow,
 Lookes on the dull earth with disturbed minde:
 Taking no notice that she is so nye,
 For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O what a sight it was wistly to view,
 How she came stealing to the wayward boy,
 To note the fighting conflict of her hew,
 How white and red, ech other did destroy:
 But now her cheeke was pale, and by and by
 It flasht forth fire, as lightning from the skie.

Now was she iust before him as he sat,
 And like a lowly louer downe she kneeles,
 VVith one faire hand she heaueth vp his hat,
 Her other tender hand his faire cheeke feeles:
 His tendrer cheeke, receiues her soft hands print,
 As apt, as new falne snow takes any dint.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

355 Oh what a war of lookes was then betweene them,
 Her eyes petitioners to his eyes suing,
 His eyes saw her eyes, as they had not scene them,
 358 Her eyes wooed still, his eyes disdaind the wooing:
 And all this dumbe play had his acts made plain,
 360 VVith tears which Chorus-like her eyes did rain.

361 Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
 A lillie prifond in a gaile of snow,
 Or Iuorie in an allablaster band,
 364 So white a friend, in girts so white a fo:
 This beautious combat wilfull, and vnwilling,
 366 Showed like two siluer doues that fit a billing.

367 Once more the engin of her thoughts began,
 O fairest mouer on this mortall round,
 VVould thou wert as I am, and I a man,
 370 My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound,
 For one sweet looke thy helpe I would assure thee,
 374 Thogh nothing but my bodies banewold cure thee

375 Giue me my hand (saith he,) why dost thou feele it?
 Giue me my heart (saith she,) and thou shalt haue it.
 O giue it me lest thy hard heart do steele it,
 376 And being steeld, soft sighes can neuer graue it.
 Then loues deepe grones, I neuer shall regard,
 378 Because Adonis heart hath made mine hard.

For

VENVS AND ADONIS.

For shame he cries, let go, and let me go, 379
 My dayes delight is past, my horse is gone,
 And tis your fault I am bereft him so,
 I pray you hence, and leaue me here alone, 382
 For all my mind, my thought, my busie care,
 Is how to get my palfrey from the mare. 384

Thus she replies, thy palfrey as he should, 385
 Welcomes the warme approach of sweet desire,
 Affection is a coale that must be coold,
 Else sufferd it will set the heart on fire, 388
 The sea hath bounds, but deepe desire hath none,
 Therefore no maruell though thy horse be gone. 390

How like a iade he stood tied to the tree, 391
 Seruilly maisterd with a leatherne raine,
 But when he saw his loue, his youths faire see,
 He held such pettie bondage in disdaine : 394
 Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
 Enfranchising his mouth, his backe, his brest. 396

Who sees his true-loue in her naked bed, 397
 Teaching the sheets a whiter hew then white,
 But when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
 His other agents ayme at like delight ? 400
 Who is so faint that dares not be so bold,
 To touch the fier the weather being cold ? 402

VENVS AND ADONIS.

403 Let me excuse thy courser gentle boy,
 And learne of him I heartily beseech thee,
 To take aduantage on presented ioy,
 406 Though I were dūbe, yet his proceedings teach thee
 O learne to loue, the lesson is but plaine,
 408 And once made perfect, neuer lost againe.

409 I know not loue (quoth he) nor will not know it,
 Vnlesse it be a Boare, and then I chase it,
 Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it,
 412 My loue to loue, is loue, but to disgrace it,
 For I haue heard, it is a life in death,
 414 That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.

415 VWho weares a garment shapelesse and vnfinisht?
 VWho plucks the bud before one leafe put forth?
 If springing things be anie iot diminisht,
 418 They wither in their prime, proue nothing worth,
 The colt that's backt and burthend being yong,
 420 Loseth his pride, and neuer waxeth strong.

421 You hurt my hand with wringing, let vs part,
 And leaue this idle theame, this bootlesse chat,
 Remoue your siege from my vnyeelding hart,
 424 To loues allarmes it will not ope the gate,
 Dismiss your vows, your fained tears, your flattery,
 426 For where a heart is hard they make no battry.

what

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VVhat canst thou talke (quoth she) hast thou a tong?

O would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing,

Thy marmaites voice hath done me double wrong,

I had my lode before, now prest with bearing,

Mellodious discord, heauenly tune harsh sounding,

Eares deep sweet musik, & harts deep sore wounding

Had I no eyes but eares, my eares would loue,

That inward beautie and inuisible,

Or were I deafe, thy outward parts would moue

Ech part in me, that were but sensible,

Though neither eyes, nor eares, to heare nor see,

Yet should I be in loue, by touching thee.

Say that the sence of feeling were bereft me,

And that I could not see, nor heare, nor touch,

And nothing but the verie smell were left me,

Yet would my loue to thee be still as much,

For frō the stillitorie of thy face excellling, (ling.

Coms breath perfumd, that breedeth loue by smel-

But oh what banquet wert thou to the tast,

Being nurse, and feeder of the other foure,

VVould they not wish the feast might euer last,

And bid suspition double looke the dore;

Lest ieaalousie that fower vnwelcome guest,

Should by his stealing in disturbe the feast?

D ij

VENVS AND ADONIS.

457 Once more the rubi-colour'd portall opend,
 V Which to his speech did honie passage yeeld,
 Like a red mornethat euer yet betokend,
 459 vvracke to the sea-man, tempest to the field:
 Sorrow to shepherds, wo vnto the birds,
 460 Gusts, and foule flaws, to heardmen, & to herds.

457 This ill presage aduisedly she marketh,
 Euen as the wind is husht before it raineth:
 Or as the wolfe doth grin before he barketh:
 460 Or as the berrie breakes before it staineth:
 Or like the deadly bullet of a gun:
 462 His meaning strucke her ere his words begun.

463 And at his looke she flatly falleth downe,
 For lookes kill loue, and loue by lookes reuiueth,
 A smile recures the wounding of a frowne,
 466 But blessed bankrout that by loue so thriueth.
 The sillie boy beleeuing she is dead,
 468 Claps her pale cheeke, till clapping makes it red.

469 And all amaz'd, brake off his late intent,
 For sharply he did thinke to reprehend her,
 VVhich cunning loue did wittily preuent,
 472 Faire-fall the wit that can so well defend her:
 For on the grasse she lyes as she were flaine,
 474 Till his breath breatheth life in her againe.

He

VENVS AND ADONIS.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheekes,
 He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard,
 He chafes her lips, a thousand wayes he seekes,
 To mend the hurt, that his vnkindnesse mard,
 He kisses her, and she by her good will,
 VVill neuer rise, so he will kisse her still.

475

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480

The night of sorrow now is turnd to day,
 Her two blew windowes faintly she vpheaueth,
 Like the faire sunne when in his fresh array,
 He cheeres the morne, and all the earth relecueth:
 And as the bright sunne glorifies the skie:
 So is her face illumind with her eye.

481

484

485

VVhose beames vpon his hairelesse face are fixt,
 As if from thence they borrowed all their shine,
 VVere neuer foure such lamps, together mixt,
 Had not his clouded with his browes repine.

487

490

But hers, which through the cristal tears gae light,
 Shone like the Moone in water scene by night.

492

O where am I (quoth she,) in earth or heauen,
 Or in the Ocean drencht, or in the fire:

493

VVhat houre is this, or morne, or wearie euen,
 Do I delight to die or life desire?

496

But now I liu'd, and life was deaths annoy,
 But now I dy'de, and death was liuely ioy.

498

D iij

VENVS AND ADONIS.

490 O thou didst kill me, kill me once againe,
 Thy eyes shrowd tutor, that hard heart of thine,
 Hath taught them scornfull tricks, & such disdain,
 502 That they haue murdred this poore heart of mine,
 And these mine eyes true leaders to their queene,
 504 But for thy piteous lips no more had seene.

505 Long may they kisse ech other for this cure,
 Oh neuer let their crimson lieries weare,
 And as they last, their verdour still endure,
 508 To driue infection from the dangerous yeare :
 That the star-gazers hauing writ on death,
 510 May say, the plague is banisht by thy breath.

511 Pure lips, sweet seales in my soft lips imprinted,
 VVhat bargaines may I make still to be sealing ?
 To sell my selfe I can be well contented,
 514 So thou wilt buy, and pay, and vse good dealing,
 VVhich purchase if thou make, for feare of slips,
 516 Set thy seale manuell; on my wax-red lips.

517 A thousand kisses buyes my heart from me,
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one,
 VVhat is ten hundred touches vnto thee,
 520 Are they not quickly told, and quickly gone ?
 Say for non-paimēt, that the debt should double,
 Is twentie hundred kisses such a trouble ?

Faire

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Faire Queene (quoth he) if anie loue you owe me, 523
 Measure my strangeness with my vnripe yeares,
 Before I know my selfe, seeke not to know me,
 No fisher but the vngrowne frie forbeares, 526
 The mellow plum doth fall, the greene sticks fast,
 Or being early pluckt, is sower to tast. 528

Looke the worlds comforter with wearie gate, 529
 His dayes hot taske hath ended in the west,
 The owle (nights herald) shreeks, tis verie late,
 The sheepe are gone to fold, birds to their nest, 532
 And cole-black clouds, that shadow heauens light,
 Do summon vs to part, and bid good night. 534

Now let me say goodnight, and so say you, 535
 If you will say so, you shall haue a kis;
 Goodnight (quoth she) and ere he sayes adue,
 The honie fee of parting tendred is, 538
 Her armes do lend his necke a sweet imbrace,
 Incorporate then they seeme, face growes to face. 540

Till breathlesse he disioynd, and backward drew, 541
 The heauenly moisture that sweet corall mouth,
 VVhose precious tast, her thirstie lips well knew,
 VVhereon they surfet, yet complaine on drouth, 544
 How with her plentie prest she faint with dearth,
 Their lips together glewed, fall to the earth. 546

VENVS AND ADONIS.

547 Now quicke desire hath caught the yeelding pray,
 And gluttonlike she feeds, yet neuer filleth,
 Her lips are conquerers, his lips obay,
 550 Paying what ransome the insulter willetth:
 VVhose vultur thought doth pitch the price so hie,
 552 That she will draw his lips rich treasure drie.

553 And hauing felt the sweetnesse of the spoile,
 VVith blind fold furie she begins to forrage,
 Her face doth reeke, & smoke, her blood doth boile,
 556 And carelesse lust stirs vp a desperat courage,
 Planting obliuion, beating reason backe,
 558 Forgetting shames pure blush, & honors wracke.

559 Hot, faint, and wearie, with her hard imbracing,
 Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much hādling,
 Or as the fleet-foot Roe that's tyr'd with chasing,
 562 Or like the froward infant stild with dandling:
 He now obayes, and now no more resisteth,
 564 VVhile she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

565 VVhat waxe so frozen but dissolues with tempring,
 And yeelds at last to euerie light impressiō?
 Things out of hope, are compast oft with ventring,
 568 Chiefly in loue, whose leaue exceeds commission:
 Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,
 560 But thē woes best, whe most his choice is froward.
VVhen

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VWhen he did frowne, ô had she then gaue ouer, 571
 Such nectar from his lips she had not suckt,
 Foule wordes, and frownes, must not repell a loue,
 VWhat though the rose haue prickles, yet tis pluckt? 574
 VVere beautie vnder twentie locks kept fast,
 Yet loue breaks through, & picks them all at last. 576

For pittie now she can no more detaine him, 577
 The poore foole praies her that he may depart,
 She is resolu'd no longer to restraine him,
 Bids him farewell, and looke well to her hart, 580
 The which by Cupids bow she doth protect,
 He carries thence incaged in his brest. 582

Sweet boy she saies, this night ile wast in sorrow, 583
 For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch,
 Tell me loues maister, shall we meete to morrow,
 Say, shall we, shall we, wilt thou make the match? 586
 He tell's her no, to morrow he intends,
 To hunt the boare with certaine of his frends. 588

The boare (quoth she) whereat a suddain pale, 589
 Like lawne being spred vpon the blushing rose,
 Vsurpes her cheeke, she trembles at his tale,
 And on his neck her yoaking armes she throwes. 592
 She sincketh downe, still hanging by his necke,
 He on her belly fall's, she on her backe. 594

VENVS AND ADONIS.

595 Now is she in the verie lists of loue,
 Her champion mounted for the hot incounter,
 All is imaginarie she doth proue,
 598 He will not mannage her, although he mount her,
 That worse then Tantalus is her annoy,
 600 To clip Elizium, and to lacke her ioy.

601 Euen so poore birds deceiu'd with painted grapes,
 Do surfet by the eye, and pine the maw :
 Euen so she languisheth in her mishaps,
 604 As those poore birds that helplesse berries saw,
 The warme effects which she in him finds missing,
 606 She seekes to kindle with continuall kissing.

607 But all in vaine, good Queene, it will not bee,
 She hath assai'd as much as may be prou'd,
 Her pleading hath deseru'd a greater fee,
 610 She's loue; she loues, and yet she is not lou'd,
 Fie, fie, he saies, you crush me, let me go,
 612 You haue no reason to withhold me so.

613 Thou hadst bin gone (quoth she) sweet boy ere this,
 But that thou toldst me, thou woldst hunt the boare,
 Oh be aduisd, thou know'st nor what it is,
 616 VVith iauelings point a churlish swine to goare,
 VVhose tusshes neuer sheathd, he whetteth still,
 618 Like to a mortall butcher bent to kill.

On

VENVS AND ADONIS.

On his bow-backe, he hath a battell set,
 Of brisly pikes that euer threat his foes,
 His eyes like glow-wormes shine when he doth fret
 His snout digs sepulchers where ere he goes,
 Being mou'd he strikes, what ere is in his way,
 And whom he strikes, his crooked tuskes slay.

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624

His brawnie sides with hairie bristles armed,
 Are better prooffe then thy speares point can enter,
 His short thick necke cannot be easly harmed,
 Being irefull, on the lyon he will venter,
 The thornie brambles, and imbracing bushes,
 As fearefull of him part, through whom he rushes.

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630

Alas, he naught esteem's that face of thine,
 To which loues eyes paies tributarie gazes,
 Nor thy soft handes, sweet lips, and christall cine,
 VVhose full perfection all the world amazes,
 But hauing thee at vantage (wondrous dread!)
 VVold roote these beauties, as he root's the mead.

631

634

636

Oh let him keep his loathsome cabin still,
 Beautie hath naught to do with such foule fiends,
 Come not within his danger by thy will,
 They that thriue well, take counsell of their friends,
 VVhen thou didst name the boare, not to dissemble
 I feard thy fortune, and my ioynts did tremble.

637

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642

VENVS AND ADONIS.

643 Didst thou not marke my face, was it not white?
 Sawest thou not signes of feare lurke in mine eye?
 Grew I not faint, and fell I not downe right?
 646 VWithin my bosome whereon thou doest lye,
 My boding heart, pants, beats, and takes no rest,
 648 But like an earthquake, shakes thee on my brest.

649 For where loue raignes, disturbing ieaousie,
 Doth call him selfe affections centinell,
 Giues false alarmes, suggesteth mutinie,
 652 And in a peacefull houre doth crie, kill, kill,
 Distempring gentle loue in his desire,
 654 As aire, and water do abate the fire.

655 This sower informer, this bate-breeding spie,
 This canker that eats vp louses tender spring,
 This carry-tale, dissentious ieaousie,
 658 That somtime true newes, somtime false doth bring,
 Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine eare,
 660 That if I loue thee, I thy death should feare.

661 And more then so, presenteth to mine eye,
 The picture of an angrie chafing boare,
 Vnder whose sharpe fangs, on his backe doth lye,
 664 An image like thy selfe, all staynd with goare,
 v whose blood vpon the fresh flowers being shed,
 666 Doth make the droop with grief. & hang the hed.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

What should I do, seeing thee so indeed?
 That tremble at th'imagination,
 The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,
 And feare doth teach it diuination;

667

I prophecie thy death, my liuing sorrow,
 If thou incounter with the boare to morrow.

670

672

But if thou needs wilt hunt, be rul'd by me,
 Vncouple at the timerous flying hare,
 Or at the foxe which liues by subtiltie,
 Or at the Roe which no incounter dare:

673

Pursue these fearfull creatures o're the downes,
 And on thy wel breathd horse keep with thy hounds

676

678

And when thou hast on foote the purblind hare,
 Marke the poore wretch to ouer-shut his troubles,
 How he outruns the wind, and with what care,
 He crankes and crosses with a thousand doubles,

679

682

The many musits through the which he goes,
 Are like a laberinth to amaze his foes.

684

Sometime he runnes among a flocke of sheepe,
 To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
 And sometime where earth-deluing Conies keepe,
 To stop the loud pursuers in their yell:

685

688

And sometime sorteth with a heard of deare,
 Danger deuifeth shifts, wit waites on feare.

690

VENVS AND ADONIS.

697 For there his smell with others being mingled,
 The hot sent-snuffing hounds are driuen to doubt,
 Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they haue singled
 699 VWith much ado the cold fault cleanly out,
 Then do they spend their mouth's, eccho replies,
 696 As if an other chase were in the skies.

697 By this poore wat farre off vpon a hill,
 Stands on his hinder-legs with listning care,
 To hearken if his foes pursue him still,
 700 Anon their loud alarums he doth heare,
 And now his griefe may be compared well,
 702 To one fore sicke, that heares the passing bell.

703 Then shalt thou see the deaw-bedabbled wretch,
 Turne, and returne, indenting with the way,
 Ech enuious brier, his wearie legs do scratch,
 706 Ech shadow makes him stop, ech murmour stay,
 For miserie is troden on by manie,
 708 And being low, neuer releeu'd by anie.

709 Lye quietly, and heare a litle more,
 Nay do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise,
 To make thee hate the hunting of the bore,
 712 Vnlike my selfe thou hear'st me moralize,
 Applying this to that, and so to so,
 714 For loue can comment vpon euerie wo.

VWhere

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VWhere did I leaue ? no matter where (quoth he) 715
 Leaue me, and then the storie aptly ends,
 The night is spent ; why what of that (quoth she ?)
 I am (quoth he) expected of my friends, 718
 And now tis darke, and going I shall fall.
 In night (quoth she) desire sees best of all. 720

But if thou fall, oh then imagine this, 721
 The earth in loue with thee, thy footing trips,
 And all is but to rob thee of a kis,
 Rich prayes make true-men thecues : so do thy lips 724
 Make modest Dyan, cloudie and forlorne,
 Lest she should steale a kisse and die forsworne. 726

Now of this darke night I perceiue the reason, 727
 Cinthia for shame, obscures her siluer shine,
 Till forging nature be condemn'd of treason,
 For stealing moulds from heauen, that were diuine, 730
 VVherin she fram'd thee, in hie heauens despight,
 To shame the sunne by day, and her by night. 732

And therefore hath she brib'd the destinies, 732
 To crosse the curious workmanship of nature,
 To mingle beautie with infirmities,
 And pure perfection with impure defeature, 736
 Making it subiect to the tyrannie,
 Of mad mischances, and much miserie. 738

VENVS AND ADONIS.

739 As burning feauers, agues pale, and faint,
 Life-poysoning pestilence, and frendzies wood,
 The marrow-eating sicknesse whose attaint,
 742 Disorder breeds by heating of the blood,
 Surfets, impostumes, grieffe, and damnd dispaire,
 744 Swear natures death, for framing thee so faire.

745 And not the least of all these maladies,
 But in one minutes fight brings beautie vnder,
 Both fauour, fauour, hew, and qualities,
 748 VWhereat the th'impartiall gazer late did wonder,
 Are on the sudden wasted, thawed, and donne,
 750 As mountain snow melts with the midday sonne.

751 Therefore despight of fruitlesse chastitie,
 Loue-lacking vestals, and selfe-louing Nuns,
 That on the earth would breed a scarcitie,
 754 And barraine dearth of daughters, and of suns;
 Be prodigall, the lampe that burnes by night,
 756 Dries vp his oyle, to lend the world his light.

757 VVhat is thy bodie but a swallowing graue,
 Seeming to burie that posteritie,
 VVhich by the rights of time thou needs must haue,
 760 If thou destroy them not in darke obscuritie?
 If so the world will hold thee in disdaine,
 762 Sith in thy pride, so faire a hope is slaine.

So

VENVS AND ADONIS.

So in thy selfe, thy selfe art made away,
 A mischief worse then ciuill home-bred strife,
 Or theirs whose desperat hands them selues do slay,
 Or butcher fire, that reaues his sonne of life:

Foule cankring rust, the hidden treasure frets,
 But gold that's put to vse more gold begets.

Nay then (quoth Adon) you will fall againe,
 Into your idle ouer-handled theame,
 The kisse I gaue you is bestow'd in vaine,
 And all in vaine you striue against the streame,
 For by this black-fac't night, desires foule nourse,
 Your treatise makes me like you, worse & worse.

If loue haue lent you twentie thousand tongues,
 And euerie tongue more mouing then your owne,
 Bewitching like the wanton Marmaids songs,
 Yet from mine eare the tempting tune is blowne,
 For know my heart stands armed in mine eare,
 And will not let a false sound enter there.

Lest the deceiuing harmonie should ronne,
 Into the quiet closure of my brest,
 And then my litle heart were quite vndone,
 In his bed-chamber to be bard of rest,
 No Ladie no, my heart longs not to grone,
 But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

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VENVS AND ADONIS.

787 **V**What haue you vrg'd, that I can not reprove ?
 The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger,
 I hate not loue, but your deuise in loue,
 790 That lends imbracements vnto euery stranger,
 You do it for increase, ô straunge excuse!
 792 **V**When reason is the bawd to lusts abuse.

793 Call it not loue, for loue to heauen is fled,
 Since sweating lust on earth vsurpt his name,
 Vnder whose simple semblance he hath fed,
 796 Vpon fresh beautie, blotting it with blame;
VWhich the hot tyrant stains, & soone bereaues:
 798 As Caterpillers do the tender leaues.

799 **L**oue comforteth like sun-shine after raine,
 But lusts effect is tempest after sunne,
Loues gentle spring doth alwayes fresh remaine,
 802 **L**usts winter comes, ere sommer halfe be donne:
Loue surfets not, lust like a glutton dies:
 804 **L**oue is all truth, lust full of forged lies.

805 **M**ore I could tell, but more I dare not say,
 The text is old, the Orator too greene,
 Therefore in sadnesse, now I will away,
 808 **M**y face is full of shame, my heart of teene,
Mine eares that to your wanton talke attended,
 810 **D**o burne them selues, for hauing so offended.

VVith

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VWith this he breaketh from the sweet embrace,
 Of those faire armes which bound him to her brest,
 And homeward through the dark lawnd runs apace,
 Leaues loue vpon her backe, deeply distrest,
 Looke how a bright star shooteth from the skye;
 So glides he in the night from Venus eye.

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VWhich after him she dartes, as one on shore
 Gazing vpon a late embarked friend,
 Till the wilde waues will haue him seene no more,
 VWhose ridges with the meeting cloudes contend:
 So did the mercilesse, and pitchie night,
 Fold in the obiect that did feed her sight.

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VWhereat amaf'd as one that vnaware,
 Hath dropt a precious ieuell in the flood,
 Or stonisht, as night wandrers often are,
 Their light blowne out in some mistrustfull wood;
 Euen so confounded in the darke she lay,
 Hauing lost the faire discoverie of her way.

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And now she beates her heart, whereat it grones,
 That all the neighbour caues as seeming troubled,
 Make verball repetition of her mones,
 Passion on passion, deeply is redoubled,
 Ay me, she cries, and twentie times, wo, wo,
 And twentie ecchoes, twentie times crie so,

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VENVS AND ADONIS.

835 She marking them, begins a wailing note,
 And sings extemporally a wofull dittie,
 How loue makes yong-men thrall, & old men dote,
 838 How loue is wise in follie, foolish wittie:

Her heauie antheime still concludes in wo,
 840 And still the quier of ecchoes answer so.

841 Her song wastedious, and out-wore the night,
 For louers houres are long, though seeming short,
 If pleas'd themselues, others they thinke delight,
 844 In such like circumstance, with such like sport:

Their copious stories oftentimes begunne,
 846 End without audience, and are neuer donne.

847 For who hath she to spend the night withall,
 But idle sounds resembling parasits?
 Like shrill-tongu'd Tapsters answering euerie call,
 850 Soothing the humor of fantastique wits,
 She sayes tis so, they answer all tis so,
 852 And would say after her, if she said no.

852 Lo here the gentle larke wearie of rest,
 From his moyst cabinet mounts vp on hie,
 And wakes the morning, from whose siluer brest,
 856 The sunne ariseth in his maiestie,
 VWho doth the world so gloriously behold,
 858 That Ceader tops and hills, seeme burnisht gold.

Venus

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Venus salutes him with this faire good morrow,
 Oh thou cleare god, and patron of all light,
 From whom ech lamp, and shining star doth borrow,
 The beautious influence that makes him bright,
 There liues a sonne that suckt an earthly mother,
 May lend thee light, as thou doest lend to other.

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This sayd, she hasteth to a mirtle groue,
 Musing the morning is so much ore-worne,
 And yet she heares no tidings of her loue;
 She harkens for his hounds, and for his horne,
 Anon she heares them chaunt it lustily,
 And all in hast she coasteth to the cry.

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And as she runnes, the bushes in the way,
 Some catch her by the necke, some kisse her face,
 Some twin'd about her thigh to make her stay,
 She wildly breaketh from their strict imbrace,
 Like a milch Doe, whose swelling dugs do ake,
 Hasting to feed her fawne, hid in some brake,

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By this she heares the hounds are at a bay,
 VVhereat she starts like one that spies an adder,
 VVreath'd vp in farall folds iust in his way,
 The feare whereof doth make him shake, & shudder,
 Euen so the timerous yelping of the hounds,
 Appals her senses, and her spirit confounds.

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VENVS AND ADONIS.

883 For now she knowes it is no gentle chafe,
 But the blunt boare, rough beare, or lyon proud,
 Because the crier remaineth in one place,
 886 VWhere fearefully the dogs exclaime aloud,
 Finding their enemy to be so curst,
 889 They all straine curstie who shall cope him first.

889 This dismall crie rings sadly in her eare,
 Through which it enters to surprize her hart,
 VWho ouercome by doubt, and bloodlesse feare,
 892 VWith cold-pale weakenesse, numbs ech feeling part,
 Like soldiers when their captain once doth yeeld,
 895 They basely flie, and dare not stay the field.

895 Thus stands she in a trembling extasie,
 Till cheering vp her senses all dismayd,
 She tels them tis a causlesse fantasie,
 898 And childish error that they are affrayd,
 Bids thē leaue quaking, bids them feare no more,
 900 And with that word, she spide the hunted boare.

901 VWhose frothie mouth bepainted all with red,
 Like milke, & blood, being mingled both together,
 A second feare through all her sinewes spred,
 904 VWhich madly hurries her, she knowes not whither,
 This way she runs, and now she will no further,
 906 But backe retires, to rate the boare for murder.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

A thousand spleenes beare her a thousand wayes,
 She treads the path, that she vntreads againe;
 Her more then hast, is mated with delayes,
 Like the proceedings of a drunken braine,
 Full of respects, yet naught at all respecting,
 In hand with all things, naught at all effecting.

Here kenneld in a brake, she finds a hound,
 And askes the wearie caitiffe for his maister,
 And there another licking of his wound,
 Gainst venomd sores, the onely soueraigne plaister.
 And here she meets another, sadly skowling,
 To whom she speaks, & he replies with howling.

VWhen he hath ceast his ill resounding noise,
 Another flapmouthd mourner, blacke, and grim,
 Against the welkin, volies out his voyce,
 Another, and another, answer him,
 Clapping their proud tailes to the ground below,
 Shaking their scratcht-ears, bleeding as they go.

Looke how, the worlds poore people are amazed,
 At apparitions, signes, and prodigies,
 VWhereon with feareful eyes, they long haue gazed,
 Infusing them with dreadfull prophecies;
 So she at these sad signes, drawes vp her breath,
 And sighing it againe, exclames on death.

VENVS AND ADONIS.

937 Hard fauour'd tyrant, ougly, meagre, leane,
 Hatefull diuorce of loue, (thus chides she death)
 Grim-grinning ghost, earths-worme what dost thou
 937 To stifle beautie, and to steale his breath? (meane?
 VWho when he liu'd, his breath and beautie set
 936 Glosse on the rose, smell to the violet.

937 If he be dead, ô no, it cannot be,
 Seeing his beautie, thou shouldst strike at it,
 Oh yes, it may, thou hast no eyes to see,
 940 But hatefully at randon doest thou hit,
 Thy marke is feeble age, but thy false dart,
 942 Mistakes that aime, and cleaues an infants hart.

943 Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
 And hearing him, thy power had lost his power,
 The destinies will curse thee for this stroke,
 946 They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluckst a flower,
 Loues golden arrow at him should haue fled,
 948 And not deaths ebon dart to strike him dead.

949 Dost thou drink tears, that thou prouok'st such wee-
 VWhat may a heauie grone aduantage thee? (ping,
 VWhy hast thou cast into eternall sleeping,
 952 Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?
 Now nature cares not for thy mortall vigour,
 954 Since her best worke is ruin'd with thy rigour.

Here

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Here ouercome as one full of dispaire,
 She vaild her eye-lids, who like sluces stopt
 The christall tide, that from her two cheeks faire,
 In the sweet channell of her bosome dropt.

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But through the floud-gates breaks the siluer rain,
 And with his strong course opens them againe.

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O how her eyes, and teares, did lend, and borrow,
 Her eye seene in the teares, teares in her eye,
 Both christals, where they viewd ech others sorrow:
 Sorrow, that friendly sighs sought still to drye,
 But like a stormie day, now wind, now raine,
 Sighs drie her cheeks, teares make thẽ wet againe.

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Variable passions throng her constant wo,
 As striuing who should best become her grieffe,
 All entertaind, ech passion labours so,
 That euerie present sorrow seemeth chiefe,
 But none is best, then ioyne they all together,
 Like many clouds, consulting for foule weather.

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By this farre off, she heares some huntsman hallow,
 A nourses song nere pleasd her babe so well,
 The dyre imagination she did follow,
 This sound of hope doth labour to expell,
 For now reuiuing ioy bids her reioyce,
 And flatters her, it is Adonis voyce.

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VENVS AND ADONIS.

979 **V**Whereat her teares began to turne their tide,
 Being prisond in her eye: like pearles in glasse,
 Yet sometimes fals an orient drop beside,
 982 **V**Which her cheeke melts, as scorning it should passe
 To wash the soule face of the sluttish ground,
 984 **V**Who is but dronken when she seemeth drownd.

985 **O** hard beleeuing loue how strange it seemes!
 Not to belecue, and yet too credulous:
 Thy weale, and wo, are both of them extreames,
 988 **D**espaire, and hope, makes thee ridiculous.
 The one doth flatter thee in thoughts vnlikely,
 990 **I**n likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

991 **N**ow she vnweaues the web that she hath wrought,
 Adonis liues, and death is not to blame:
 It was not she that cald him all to nought;
 994 **N**ow she ads honours to his hatefull name.
 She clepes him king of graues, & graue for kings,
 996 **I**mperious supreme of all mortall things.

997 **N**o, no, quoth she, sweet death, I did but iest,
 Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of feare
VWhen as I met the boare, that bloodie beast,
 1000 **V**Which knowes no pitie but is still feure,
 Then gentle shadow (truth I must confesse)
 1002 **I**rayld on thee, fearing my loues decesse.

Tis

VENVS AND ADONIS.

Tis not my fault, the Bore prouok't my tong,
 Be wreak't on him (inuisible commaunder) 1003
 T'is he foule creature, that hath done thee wrong,
 I did but act, he's author of thy slaunder 1006
 Greefe hath two tongues, and neuer woman yet,
 Could rule them both, without ten womens wit. 1008

Thus hoping that Adonis is aliue,
 Her rash suspect she doth extenuate, 1009
 And that his beautie may the better thriue,
 VVith death she humbly doth insinuate. 1012
 Tels him of trophies, statues, tombes, and stories,
 His victories, his triumphs, and his glories. 1014

O loue quoth she, how much a foole was I,
 To be of such a weake and sillie mind, 1015
 To waile his death who liues, and must not die,
 Till mutuall ouerthrow of mortall kind? 1018
 For he being dead, with him is beautie slaine,
 And beautie dead, blacke Chaos comes againe. 1020

Fy, fy, fond loue, thou art as full of feare,
 As one with treasure laden, hem'd with theeues, 1027
 Trifles vnwitnessed with eye, or eare,
 Thy coward heart with false bethinking greeues. 1029
 Euen at this word she heares a merry horne,
 VVhereat she leaps, that was but late forlorne. 1030

VENVS AND ADONIS.

1027 As Faulcons to the lure, away she flies,
 The grasse stoops not, she treads on it so light,
 And in her hast, vnfortunately spies,
 1030 The foule boares conquest, on her faire delight,
 VWhich seene, her eyes are murdred with the view,
 1032 Like stars asham'd of day, themselues withdrew.

1033 Or as the snaile, whose tender hornes being hit,
 Shrinks backward in his shellie caue with paine,
 And, there all smoothred vp, in shade doth sit,
 1036 Long after fearing to creepe forth againe:
 So at his bloodie view her eyes are fled,
 1038 Into the deep-darke cabbins of her head.

1039 VWhere they resigne their office, and their light,
 To the disposing of her troubled braine,
 VWho bids them still consort with ougly night,
 1042 And neuer wound the heart with lookes againe,
 VWho like a king perplexed in his throne,
 1044 By their suggestion, giues a deadly grone.

1045 VWhereat ech tributarie subiect quakes,
 As when the wind imprisond in the ground,
 Struggling for passage, earths foundation shakes,
 1048 which with cold terror, doth mens minds confound:
 This mutinie ech part doth so surprise,
 1050 That frō their dark beds once more leap her eies.
And

VENVS AND ADONIS.

And being opend, threw vnwilling light,
 Vpon the wide wound, that the boare had trencht
 In his soft flanke, whose wonted lillie white
 VVith purple tears that his wound wept, had drēcht.
 No floure was nigh, no grasse, hearb, leaf, or weed,
 But stole his blood, and seemd with him to bleed.

This solemne sympathie, poore Venus noteth,
 Ouer one shoulder doth she hang her head,
 Dumbly she passions, frantikely she doteth,
 She thinkes he could not die, he is not dead,
 Her voice is stopt, her ioynts forget to bow,
 Her eyes are mad, that they haue wept till now.

Vpon his hurt she lookes so stedfastly,
 That her sight dazling, makes the wound seem three,
 And then she reprehends her mangling eye,
 That makes more gashes, where no breach shuld be:
 His face seems twain, ech seuerall lim is doubled,
 For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled

My tongue cannot expresse my grieffe for one,
 And yet (quoth she) behold two Adons dead,
 My sighes are blowne away, my salt teares gone,
 Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead,
 Heaueie hearts lead melt at mine eyes red fire,
 So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

48
VENVS AND ADONIS.

1075 Alas poore world what treasure hast thou lost,
VWhat face remains aliue that's worth the viewing?
VHose tongue is musick now? what cāst thou boast,
1078 Of things long since, or any thing insuing?

1080 The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh, and trim,
But true sweet beautie liu'd, and di'de with him.

1087 Bonnet, nor vaile henceforth no creature weare,
Nor sunne, nor wind will euer striue to kisse you,
Hauing no faire to lose, you need not feare,
1092 The sun doth skorne you, & the wind doth hisse you.

1096 But when Adonis liu'de, sunne, and sharpe aire,
Lurkt like two theeues, to rob him of his faire.

1087 And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Vnder whose brim the gaudie sunne would peepe,
The wind would blow it off, and being gon,
1090 Play with his locks, then would Adonis weepe.

1092 And straight in pittie of his tender yeares, (teares.
They both would striue who first should drie his

1093 To see his face the Lion walkt along,
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him:
To recreate himself when he hath song,

1096 The Tygre would be tame, and gently heare him.

1098 If he had spoke; the wolfe would leaue his praie,
And neuer fright the fillie lambe that daie.

when

VENVS AND ADONIS.

VWhen he beheld his shadow in the brooke, 1109
 The fishes spread on it their golden gills,
 VWhen he was by the birds such pleasure tooke,
 That some would sing, some other in their bills 1102
 VVould bring him mulberries & ripe-red cherries,
 He fed them with his sight, they him with berries. 1107

But this foule, grim, and vrchin-snowted Boare, 1105
 VVhose downward eye still looketh for a graue:
 Ne're saw the beautious liuerie that he wore,
 VVitnesse the intertainment that he gaue. 1108
 If he did see his face, why then I know,
 He thought to kisse him, and hath kild him so. 1110

Tis true, tis true, thus was Adonis slaine, 1111
 He ran vpon the Boare with his sharpe speare,
 VWho did not whet his teeth at him againe,
 But by a kisse thought to persuaide him there. 1114
 And noulsing in his flanke the louing swine,
 Sheath'd vnaware the tuske in his soft groine. 1110

Had I bin tooth'd like him I must confesse, 1117
 VVith kissing him I should haue kild him first,
 But he is dead, and neuer did he bleffe
 My youth with his, the more am I accurst. 1120
 VVith this she falleth in the place she stood,
 And staines her face with his congealed blood. 1122

VENVS AND ADONIS.

1123 She lookes vpon his lips, and they are pale,
 She takes him by the hand, and that is cold,
 She whispers in his eares a heauie tale,
 1126 As if they heard the wofull words she told:
 She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
 1128 VVhere lo, two lamps burnt out in darknesse lies.

 1129 Two glasse where her selfe, her selfe beheld
 A thousand times, and now no more reflect,
 Their vertue lost, wherein they late exceld,
 1132 And euerie beautie robd of his effect;
 VVonder of time (quoth she) this is my spight,
 1134 That thou being dead, the day shuld yet be light.

 1135 Since thou art dead, lo here I prophecie,
 Sorrow on loue hereafter shall attend:
 It shall be wayted on with ieaousie,
 1138 Find sweet beginning, but vnfaurie end.
 Nere setled equally, but high or lo,
 1140 That all loues pleasure shall not match his wo.

 1141 It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud,
 Bud, and be blasted, in a breathing while,
 The bottome poyson, and the top ore-strawd
 1144 VVith sweets, that shall the truest sight beguile,
 The strongest bodie shall it make most weake,
 1146 Strike the wise dūbe, & teach the foole to speake.

It

VENVS AND ADONIS.

It shall be sparing, and too full of ryor, 1147
 Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures,
 The staring ruffian shall it keepe in quiet,
 Pluck down the rich, inrich the poore with treasures, 1150
 It shall be raging mad, and fillie milde,
 Make the yoong old, the old become a childe. 1152

It shall suspect where is no cause of feare, 1153
 It shall not feare where it should most mistrust,
 It shall be mercifull, and too seueare,
 And most deceiuing, when it seemes most iust, 1156
 Peruerse it shall be, where it showes most toward,
 Put feare to valour, courage to the coward. 1158

It shall be cause of warre, and dire euent, 1159
 And set dissention twixt the sonne, and fire,
 Subiect, and seruill to all discontents:
 As drie combultious matter is to fire, 1162
 Sith in his prime, death doth my loue destroy,
 They that loue best, their loues shall not enioy. 1164

By this the boy that by her side laie kild, 1165
 Vvas melted like a vapour from her sight,
 And in his blood that on the ground laie spild,
 A purple floure sproong vp, checkred with white, 1168
 Resembling well his pale cheekes, and the blood,
 VVhich in round drops, vpō their whitnesse stood. 1170

H

VENVS AND ADONIS.

1171 She bowes her head, the new-sprong floure to smel,
 Comparing it to her Adonis breath,
 And saies within her bosome it shall dwell,
 1174 Since he him selfe is rest from her by death;
 She crop's the stalke, and in the breach appeares,
 1176 Green-dropping sap, which she cōpares to teares.

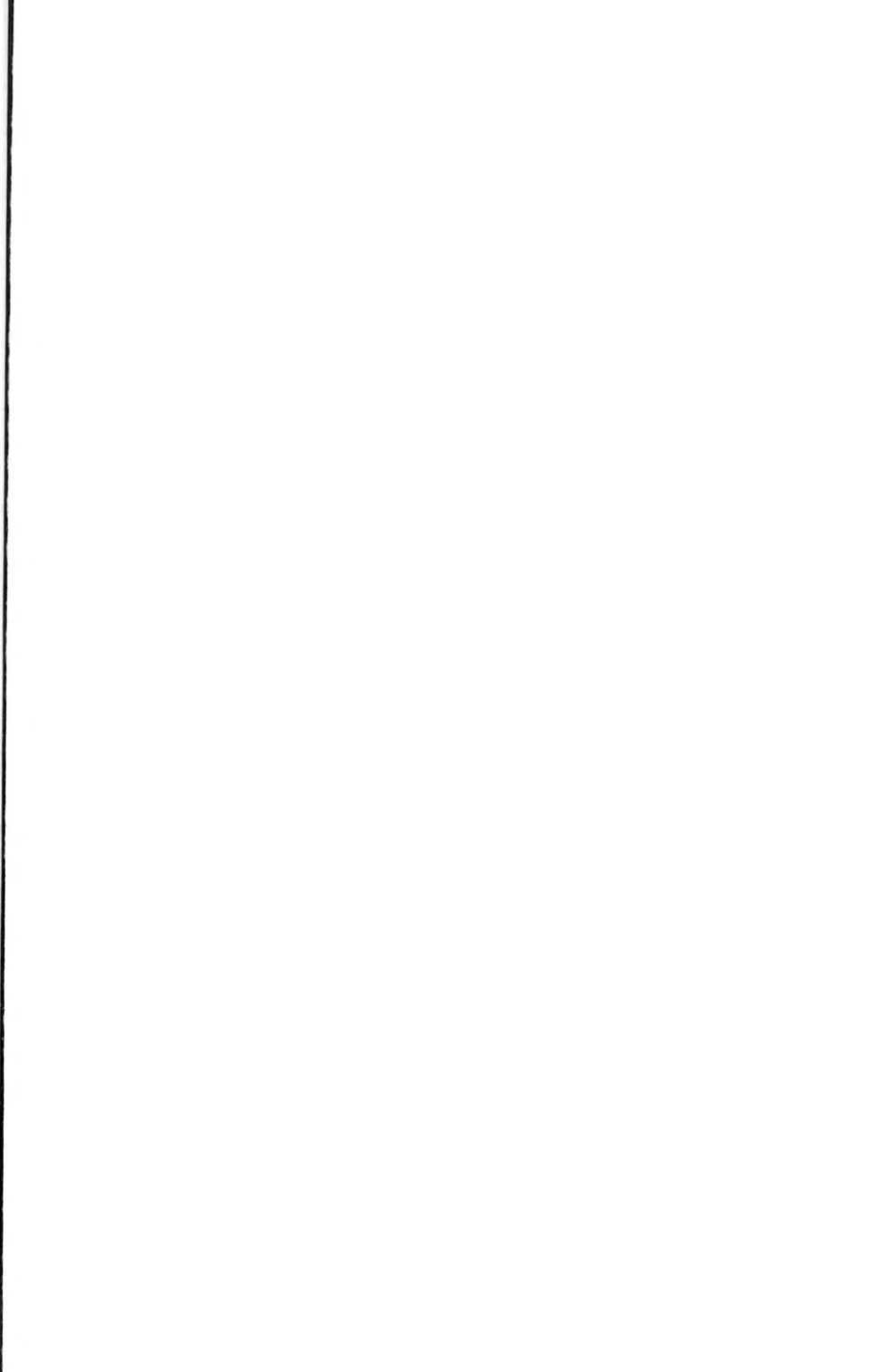
1177 Poore floure (quoth she) this was thy fathers guise,
 Sweet issue of a more sweet smelling fire,
 For euerie little grieffe to wet his eies,
 1180 To grow vnto him selfe was his desire;
 And so tis thine, but know it is as good,
 1182 To wither in my brest, as in his blood.

1183 Here was thy fathers bed, here in my brest,
 Thou art the next of blood, and tis thy right.
 Lo in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
 1186 My throbbing hart shall rock thee day and night;
 There shall not be one minute in an houre,
 1188 VVherein I wil not kisse my sweet loues floure.

1189 Thus weary of the world, away she hies,
 And yokes her siluer doues, by whose swift aide,
 Their mistresse mounted through the emptie skies,
 1192 In her light chariot, quickly is conuaide,
 Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen,
 1194 Meanes to immure her selfe, and not be seen.

FINIS





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